

2020 sag

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reaction 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, NOVEMBER 1--President Lyndon Johnson's unilateral halting of the bombing of North Vietnam--which marks the significant beginning of an American combat exit from Asia--brought jubilant, if not premature predictions of peace to the Vietnamese common man and an initial, if momentary internal political and propaganda defeat for the South Vietnamese government.

After a two weeks of bitter disagreement, but with prior notice from Washington, the American bombing cessation left the South Vietnamese government with a serious--if not irreversible--lack of confidence in the American commitment to prevent a Communist take-over in South Vietnam. ~~The~~ South ~~V~~-American-South Vietnamese alliance, inked in past Honolulu and Manila communiques for joint actions for peace, was temporarily shattered. And, at this writing, it may worsen as the Saigon regime decides whether it can "lose face" by sending its own delegation to Paris, as President Johnson said it was "free" to do, or whether it can risk losing the war by hastening a premature American withdrawal.

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reaction 2 (normass/deepe)

"We got left holding an empty bag--and anyway the bag has holes in it," one senior Vietnamese government official, speaking privately said nervously. "What does it matter if Johnson says we won't be recognizing the National Liberation Front in Paris. If we sit across the table from them, it pretty well means recognition. We still don't know if the NLF is part of the Hanoi delegation (which Saigon approved of) or if it is a separate delegation (which Saigon has vowed it would not talk with). And I doubt if the Americans ~~know~~ know these things either. Nothing is really very well settled.

"I certainly don't know how (President Nguyen Van) Thieu can back down now. But, how can he buck the Americans and boycott Paris? And if he sides with the Americans, the cynical Vietnamese will say he got paid five million dollars for ~~paying~~ saying the right thing."

A low-level Vietnamese government official said with nervous seriousness: "President Thieu has lost alot of face. ~~Insistently~~ Last ~~hexamxriuglsanxnm~~ night he made this tough speech about resisting all pressures. I don't see how he can wiggle out of this. Maybe the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) knows. They should know everything."

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reaction 2 (normass/deepe)

A Vietnamese government minister, speaking privately, said with dejection:

"We had all better get down on our knees and pray for mercy.

In the long-run, it means Asians will side with the Russians, instead of the Americans, to keep the Red Chinese at bay."

A long-time American observer in Asia explained:

"Washington has never understood the political and psychological factors in Asia. This is a severe setback for the West. Who actually believes we got any concessions out of Hanoi? You don't think Asians are going to put any stock in LBJ's saying 'I really got alot of concessions from Hanoi up my sleeve, but I can't talk about them'. And then the Viet Cong had to rocket the city right before his speech."

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reaction 3 (normass/deepe)

To the end, the Vietnamese government stood firm against a joint
American-South-Vietnamese declaration because of Hanoi's demands that the
communique would not repeat not mention the specific ~~concessions~~ ^{SAIGON Bomb. N. V. Halt} concessions
in return, ~~Them Vietnamese system~~ ^{had made} informed sources report. The Vietnamese
government had argued that without mentioning the conditions, the communique
would be a major propaganda victory for the Communists, not only in South
Vietnam, but throughout free Asia. They government officials maintained
that it would appear that the Allies had capitulated to the consistent
Hanoi demand for an unconditional cessation of the bombing, that it would
appear that the United States—rather than the North Vietnamese—had
been the ~~agg~~ aggressors and had precipitated the escalation of the war.

Hardline Western diplomats sided with the Vietnamese viewpoint.

"Any halting the bombing without mentioning the ~~conditions~~ explicit
conditions from Hanoi will give them a tremendous propaganda victory,"
one pro-American diplomat explained. "And now that's what's happened."
^{Communist} ^{THAT}

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reaction 5 (normass/deepe)

Another Vietnamese government official offered the same viewpoint.

"Half of this war here is a war of words," he said. "Hanoi is going to get on the radio and say the Americans have at last capitulated to the unconditional halting of the bombing. Even if we got conditions from Hanoi and we can't announce them what are we going to do."

"Frankly, no one believes Johnson got any conditions at all from Hanoi.

The Vietnamese government does not repeat not know what they are. And, frankly we doubt that even the Americans know what they get out of this.

~~The whole business of seating the delegations Saigon and NLF delegations at the next Paris conference is still up in the air."~~

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reaction * (normass/deepe)

The timing and a peculiar set of circumstances also seemed to taint the speech of President Johnson, which was broadcast mid-morning here over the American military radio station. The Vietnamese government radio station with-held announcement for three hours, and then it read the ~~xi~~ terse communique from the office of President Nguyen Van Thieu Thieu. The communique said simply:

"This morning November 1, at 0900, the U. S. government took the decision to announce a unilateral cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam at 2100 local time. Concerning this problem, the President will make a speech before the people and the National Assembly tomorrow at 1000 November 2."

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reaction ^{6/7/68} (normass/deepe)

two immediate factors
The political and psychological ~~setting for the unilateral announcement~~

which worked to the disadvantage of the Vietnamese government/were ~~as~~

First the
~~followed:~~

1. The Communist shelling and rocketing of Saigon, Hue, My Tho and the storage petroleum storage installation at Nhe Be in the evening and early morning hours preceding the Presidential ^{Johnson's} speech. The most gruesome attack occurred at 6:30 a.m.--two and half hours before the speech-- in which a Soviet-made .122 mm. rocket hit a Roman Catholic church filled with worshipers for the All-Soul's Day services, in which 19 were Vietnamese civilians were killed and 64 were wounded. Total Saigon casualties were 21 Vietnamese civilians killed and 78 wounded; in Hue where ten 122 mm. rocket rounds impacted inside the citadel, nine civilians were killed and 13 others wounded. In My Tho, 33 rounds of 82 mm. mortar fire ~~woul~~ wounded sixteen.

"This is just the Communist way of saying we have whipped you (with the bombing halt)--and ~~these~~ these rockets are to show we whipped you good," an official American photographer expounded. "I was trying to take a photo of the rocket round that impacted inside the Gia Long Palace and this Vietnamese captain got so mad at me and he was yelling, # 'You always talk about American ~~casualties~~ casualties--but what about Vietnamese casualties?'"

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reaction (normass/deepe)

Some Vietnamese civilians criticized the Viet Cong for unleashing the attacks during the ~~delic~~ delicate moments when peace was under ^{SERIOUS} discussions but other ^{si} criticized the Americans for not repeat not stopping the bombing of the North sooner so that the Communists would not repeat not have shelled the urban centers.

^{Second} President Johnson's unilateral announcement—ignoring Vietnamese government ~~agreement~~ agreement for the bombing halt—came as an ironic ~~and~~ shock on the Vietnamese National Day. The city was already in a holiday mood when the President's speech was broadcast; shops ~~was~~ and government offices were closed. The government had already planned its most inconspicuous of all its national days—^{military} no parades or public ceremonies were planned because ~~at~~ ^{the} on a previous anniversary the Communists had shelled reviewing stands in the center of town an hour before senior government officials arrived.

~~Some~~ Some Vietnamese voiced pride in the nationalistic stand of the ~~the~~ ^{But this was} ~~still the~~ ~~overshadowed by the~~ shock waves of what is generally interpreted here as the beginning of the "de-Americanization" of the war, ~~overshadowed the nationalistic~~

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reaction *q* (normass/deepe)

The Vietnamese National Day is also a highly ~~cont~~ controversial day for internal political reasons because it marks the 1963 ~~over~~ overthrow of Vietnam's first President, Ngo Dinh Diem—and many pro-Diemists to this day blame American officials for "dumping" ~~that~~ that regime.

But, the high-level concerns of the Vietnamese government did not repeat not penetrate to the ~~the~~ Vietnamese common man, who clearly interpreted the bombing halt as a ~~giant step towards~~ ^{BR. N9. N9} peace.

"This is a ~~very good day~~ holiday and a very good day to get the good news of the halt of the bombing," one low-class Vietnamese laborer explained. "It means things in Paris will progress towards peace. It's too bad the Communists had to spoil this happy atmosphere by mortaring and rocketing this morning."

A 22-year-old Vietnamese maid explained, "The news is ⁵very good. It means we can have a big Tet this year," referring to a happy lunar new year, which was spoiled last time by the Communist offensive.

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reaction 9/18 (normass/deepe)

In a low-class, ~~caff~~ open-air coffeeshop, Vietnamese cyclo-drivers and laborers watched the civilian casualties from the Communist shelling brought into a nearby hospital.

"When you look at that you should want nothing else but peace," one of them explained, tuning in his transistor radio for the latest news. "Now I'm glad there's a bombing halt--only that will lead to peace."

But, some of the Vietnamese army officers were clearly shaken by the news.

"We are going to have more and more trouble," a Vietnamese major said. "It sounds like 1954 again--when the French suddenly decided to end the Indo-China War. This time we don't know what will happen."

And some Vietnamese were ~~bitter~~ clearly worried.

"We don't know what will happen," a Vietnamese businessman said.

"Everything is now decided ~~by the Americans~~ secretly by the Americans and the Communists. We nationalists have not repeat no right to know about what is going on. But, anyhow halting the bombing is good if it brings peace."

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